

Baby in Your Future?
Folate Now
For a healthy you today,
For a healthy baby tomorrow.



What is folate?

Folate is a B Vitamin. It is also called folic acid or folacin.

Why do I need it?

Folate can reduce your chance of having a baby with a birth defect of the brain or spinal cord.

When do I need it?

Every day. The brain and spinal cord form during the first month of pregnancy when you may not know you are pregnant. By getting enough folate every day before you become pregnant, you help increase your chances of starting a whole, healthy baby. Since not all babies are planned, you should get enough folate every day, even if you aren't thinking about having a baby.

How much do I need?

You need 400 micrograms or 0.4 milligrams everyday.

How to add folate to your diet:

- Eat breakfast cereals fortified with folic acid (100% of the daily value)
- Eat a diet rich in bread, pasta, rice and beans
- Eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables every day.

Foods Rich in Folate

Grains - Read the food label. Some cereals have 100% of the folic acid you need in one serving, others have less. Breads, rice and pasta also have added folic acid.

Beans - Choose pinto, navy, blackeyed peas, lentils, Great Northern, black, kidney, chick-peas and split peas. Check food labels if available.

Nuts - Dry roasted peanuts, sunflower seeds, pistachios, cashews, almonds.

Fruits and Vegetables - Choose the fruits and vegetables that you enjoy eating from the list below. They are a good source of folate. Try to eat some everyday.

Orange Juice	Spinach	Asparagus
Cantaloupe	Broccoli	Green Peas
Strawberries	Tomato Juice	Cauliflower
Pineapple Juice	Oranges	Beets
Corn	Bananas	Brussel Sprouts

Finding folate on food labels

Folate may also be called folic acid or folacin on food labels.

Another source of folic acid

With everything a woman has to do, she may not find the time to eat adequate amounts of foods high in folic acid. A multi-vitamin supplement with 400 micrograms (0.4 milligrams) of folic acid can help. Ask your health care provider about supplement use.

Choosing a vitamin and mineral supplement

Remember that supplements cannot take the place of food. If you decide to take a vitamin/mineral supplement, here are some things to keep in mind:

- Look on the lable and be sure the amounts are no more than 100% of the "Daily Value (DV)". The % DV tells you how much of the recommended day's worth of the vitamin or mineral is in the supplement.
- Take no more than the number of tablets recommended in the instructions.
- Don't waste your money on high priced vitamins. Store brands are fine.
- Check the expiration date on the label. Also look for the initials "USP" or words like "release assured" or "proven release." This means the tablet is easily dissolved and absorbed by your body.
- Store the vitamins in a safe place away from the reach of children. Iron supplements are the most common cause of poisoning deaths in children.

